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Candace Havens
Director

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARINGS
NEWTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

DATE: February 26, 2015

PLACE/TIME: City Hall, Room 205
7:00 p.m.

ATTENDING: Nancy Grissom, Acting Chairman
Peter Dimond, Member
Jean Fulkerson, Member
Ellen Klapper, Alternate
See Attendance List

Mark Armstrong, Member
Laura Fitzmaurice, Member
Jeff Templer, Member
Katy Hax Holmes, Staff

ABSENT: Len Sherman, Alternate

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with Nancy Grissom presiding as Acting Chairman. Voting permanent members were Armstrong, Dimond, Fitzmaurice, Fulkerson and Templer. Klapper voted as alternate. Katy Hax Holmes acted as recording secretary and the meeting was digitally recorded on an H2 device.

1. **17 Malvern Terrace – Demolition Review**
Request to demolish all buildings on property

Charles Cossaboom, and his attorney, Terry Morris, presented their plan to take down the three buildings on this site (house, former office and garage) and rebuild the house and garage away from the floodplain and closer to the street. The current house, according to the owner, sits about 19 feet from the Charles River. He also told the Commission that permission from the Conservation Commission, as well as a special permit, would also be required for this proposed project.

Staff reported that the former camp building was erected in the 1885 as the Wawbewawa Canoe Club. This building stored and launched canoes on the first floor, including a pier and deck that stretched to the water; and a second story which held rudimentary kitchen and dining facilities. In 1946 the boat house building was converted to a two-family house under the ownership of Henry Harvey, a medical student. The parents of the current owner purchased the house in 1949, and lived on the second floor while renting out the first floor. In 2008, the owner's parents, Blair and Monica Cossaboom, moved to the first floor and gave their son and his family the second floor. The first floor has flooded several times. The current owner is asking to

demolish this structure and rebuild further back on the lot to get the house out of the flood zone. There are two other structures on the property: a garage, and a small office outbuilding that was later converted to living space. Staff recommended to the owner that the small office building be retained if possible. Given the building's condition, the former non-residential intent of the structure, and its location in the flood zone staff recommended the house not preferably preserved, with the proviso that the history of the camp be somehow preserved.

Commission members asked whether the current residential building could be moved. The owner told them the house was currently supported on piers, no foundation, and that repeated flooding of the first floor had weakened the foundation system over time. The owner also said he could see no reason to keep the former office building and detached garage as they were constructed later and had no association with the Camp. The owner offered to retain the existing cupola on the new house.

Templer made a motion to find the house and associated buildings not preferably preserved. Armstrong seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 26, 2015 the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 6-1:

RESOLVED to find the property at 17 Malvern Terrace **not preferably preserved**.

Voting in the Affirmative: Voting in the Negative: Abstained:

Nancy Grissom, Member

Jeff Templer, Member

Mark Armstrong, Member

Peter Dimond, Member

Laura Fitzmaurice, Member

Jean Fulkerson, Member

Ellen Klapper

2. **31 Donna Road – Demolition Review**

Request to demolish all buildings on property

Ron Jarek, architect, represented the owner, Phyllis Smoler, for this property, who was not in attendance. The owner wished to tear down the house rather than attempt to modernize the existing structure as a cost saving measure. Jarek told the Commission he did not think this house or style possessed any architectural or historical merit and that he did not think it should be preferably preserved.

Staff reported that this split-level brick house was built in 1956 in a neighborhood of similarly designed and sited houses from the same period. Designed by Joseph Selwyn of Belmont, the first owner and builder was John Bossi of Wiswall Road in Newton. Dennis Driscoll, an engineer, was the first owner of the house after Bossi. Howard Smoler owned the house in 1968. In 1979, Smoler received a permit for adding solar panels to his house. In the same year, this house was recognized by the Universal Life Church as hosting a congregation at this address. Staff recommended this house preferably preserved for historic context.

Commission members discussed the fact that the neighborhood had appeared to have changed little and that the houses were of a consistent massing, scale and style. Others did not agree.

Dimond made a motion to find the house preferably preserved for historic context. Fitzmaurice seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 26, 2015 the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 6-1:

RESOLVED to find the property at 31 Donna Road **preferably preserved** for historic context.

Voting in the Affirmative: Voting in the Negative: Abstained:

Nancy Grissom, Member

Jeff Templer, Member

Mark Armstrong, Member

Peter Dimond, Member

Laura Fitzmaurice, Member

Jean Fulkerson, Member

Ellen Klapper, Alternate

3. **12 Old Farm Road – Demolition Review**

Request to demolish all buildings on property

Prior to this hearing, the owner requested in writing that the item be moved to the March hearing. This request was honored and the item was not heard.

Staff reported that the house was built in 1951 and designed by Ralph I. Williams. This Ranch style house was clearly designed by an architect for this location. The asymmetrical treatment of sheathing textures, metal windows, and apparently minimal alterations to this house are tenets of the Ranch style found in 1950s architecture. This house also stands alone as a ranch on a street of other architect-designed houses, one of which the Commission reviewed (25 Old Farm Road, different architect). Williams was prolific in Newton in the 1950s, and was responsible for the Esty Farm Road historic district, and houses on Evelyn and Mary Ellen Roads, Emmons Street, and others, which this Commission has also reviewed. Five of his houses/districts have been surveyed by architectural historians. Walter Berman, who was in real estate, was the first owner in 1953 after Francis Callahan, the builder, and lived there through the 1960s. Herman Sugarman, a physician, lived here from at least 1975 through at least 1985. Staff recommends this house preferably preserved for architectural integrity and historic context.

4. **181 Pearl Street – Demolition Review**

Request to demolish all buildings on property

Mark Sullivan, contractor for the owner, Kwai Mui, represented them at this hearing. The owner was not present. Sullivan told the Commission the owners had been here for about 20 years, and a lot of work was done without permits. He also said there were environmental issues with the house such as lead paint to consider.

Staff reported that this house was not the first house built at this location, and that this Queen Anne style house was built c. 1880. This house was also owned by only two families until the 1990s. By 1886 this house appeared on maps and was owned by someone named Briston. He still owned the house in 1895, when maps show an outbuilding with this house. In 1907 the owner was Harold Murray, a bookkeeper, who continued to own the property with outbuildings by 1929. Ellen Murray obtained a permit in 1940 to expand the garage. The Murray family continued to own this property through the late 1960s, a period of about 60 years. By 1969 the owner was Hans Braun, a driver for Sawyer Construction, whose family owned the house until 1990 when it was sold to Steve Tocci. This house was surveyed by a historian in 1977. Though windows have been replaced and the house is sheathed in aluminum siding, the house retains its Queen Anne

massing, scale and orientation, and is in context with other homes in the neighborhood. Staff recommends the house preferably preserved for architectural integrity and historic context.

Commission members discussed the merits of this Queen Anne house and thought it was worthy of preservation. Others thought the house was altered and did not merit saving.

Fitzmaurice made a motion to find 181 Pearl Street preferably preserved for architectural integrity. Dimond seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 26, 2015 the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 6-1:

RESOLVED to find the property at 181 Pearl Street **preferably preserved** for architectural integrity.

Voting in the Affirmative: Voting in the Negative: Abstained:

Nancy Grissom, Member

Jeff Templar, Member

Mark Armstrong, Member

Peter Dimond, Member

Laura Fitzmaurice, Member

Jean Fulkerson, Member

Ellen Klapper, Alternate

5. **86-88 Hyde Avenue – Demolition Review**
Request to demolish all buildings on property

Mike McKay, architect for the owner, Armando Petruzzello, who was not present, presented the owner's plan to replace the two-family house with a single family house. He told the Commission the house was an oversize Dutch Colonial that did not have a true gambrel profile on the front, and that it was not the best house on the street.

Staff reported that though the Assessors date for this house comes up as 1880, there is no evidence of a house at this location until 1923, when a building permit for the house and another for the garage were found in ISD files. The first owner was Ernest Farrell, a salesman. He continued to own the house in 1937. By 1952, Harry Zellick, who worked for Majestic Furniture Company, was the owner when a permit was obtained to build the two-story side porch. Zellick continued to own the house until at least 1976. Sonia Shaw bought the house in 1989. The architect/builder was Titus & Porter of Dedham, MA, about whom I found no information. Staff found no reason to recommend this house preferably preserved for architectural integrity or historic context.

Commission members discussed whether this house had architectural integrity or context in its current design and location. All agreed that there did not appear to be context for the house in the neighborhood and it was not of a notable style.

Fulkerson made a motion to find the house not preferably preserved. Klapper seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 26, 2015 the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 7-0:

RESOLVED to find the property at 86-88 Hyde Avenue **not preferably preserved**.

Voting in the Affirmative: Voting in the Negative: Abstained:

Nancy Grissom, Member
Jeff Templer, Member
Mark Armstrong, Member
Peter Dimond, Member
Laura Fitzmaurice, Member
Jean Fulkerson, Member
Ellen Klapper, Alternate

6. **173 Langley Road – Demolition Review**
Request to demolish all buildings on property

Ernest Rogers, architect for the owner, Stephen Werchinski, Jr. who was not in attendance, presented his client's plan to replace the house with a code-compliant two family structure. The architect told the Commission that the house was vacant and that one side had been for nearly 15 years and was not structurally sound. Two abutters in the audience, who lived at 177 Langley Road and 171 Langley Road, vouched for the information and supported removal of this house. The architect also told the Commission that nine houses surrounded this lot and that the rooming house was built at the lowest point on the block, making it susceptible to water damage since it was constructed c.1900.

Staff reported that though listed on the Assessors database as built in 1850, there is no evidence of a building at this location until c.1900. For its first 36 years, this building housed laborers. Men who stayed longer than most were E.F. and William Groth, gardeners; brothers who were carpenters, by the last name of Porter; and Emilio DiLuzio, laborer, who was also listed as owner from 1913 to at least 1920. During the Depression the house was owned by Newton Center Savings Bank, but was sold to John Connors, a chauffeur, by 1939. Connors owned the building through at least the late 1960s. By 1975 the owner was John T. Basbas, a manager at McDonalds. The house is barely visible from a public way, but is a three-bay by two-bay worker cottage, two stories in height, sheathed in asbestos siding. Windows and roof have been replaced, with additions limited to a front enclosed porch, a rear porch, and a mud room. This worker cottage was built for Newton Center's laborers after the houses that currently line this side of Langley Road were constructed, and context for this building in the immediate area is limited. Staff is inclined to find this property not preferably preserved due to the lack of its architectural significance, and the fact that its historical context was limited to the late 19th century houses it was built behind. Staff was asked to clarify, and told the Commission that though this structure was built in the worker cottage style, which this Commission frequently chose to preserve, this house was never intended to front on a street or be used as anything other than a rooming house and thus did not possess significance for either architectural integrity or context.

Commission members discussed staff's findings and debated the merits of the house.

Templer made a motion to find the house not preferably preserved. Armstrong seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 26, 2015 the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 7-0:

RESOLVED to find the property at 173 Langley Road **not preferably preserved**.

Voting in the Affirmative: Voting in the Negative: Abstained:

Nancy Grissom, Member
Jeff Templer, Member
Mark Armstrong, Member
Peter Dimond, Member
Laura Fitzmaurice, Member

7. **158 Newtonville Avenue – Partial Demolition Review**
Request to remove portion front façade for veranda

Jim and Claire Robertson presented their plan to construct a veranda on the front of their Colonial Revival house, and enclose the first-story original porch to serve as an office. Laura Fitzmaurice, for the record, reported that she and Mr. Robertson served together on the Community Preservation Commission.

Staff reported that an application to tear down the concrete bunker-garage at the front of the property was approved as Not Historic just before Christmas last year. The owners had new plans for a replacement garage, which the NHC may be asked to comment on; but because staff signed off on the original garage, NHC had no review authority over the new garage. I put this new application on the agenda because the owners also wished to add an essentially Queen Anne veranda onto a Colonial Revival house. The owners presented their proposed plans at a meeting with the Planning Dept. a week or so ago, and staff suggested they come to the next NHC hearing.

Klapper made a motion to find the house preferably preserved. Fitzmaurice seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 26, 2015 the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 7-0:

RESOLVED to find the property at 158 Newtonville Avenue **preferably preserved** for architectural integrity and historic context.

Voting in the Affirmative: Voting in the Negative: Abstained:

Nancy Grissom, Member
Jeff Templer, Member
Mark Armstrong, Member
Peter Dimond, Member
Laura Fitzmaurice, Member
Jean Fulkerson, Member
Ellen Klapper, Alternate

Commission members asked about the history of the house and the porch that was to be enclosed. The owners said that the house was built as a summer cottage to accompany the nearby larger house on Bellevue Road. The owner said they also planned to emulate the existing balustrade on the front porch. Members discussed the box-like nature of the existing house and asked about other projecting features on the current house. They were told there were not any.

Fitzmaurice made a motion to waive the delay on the proposed partial demolition and addition of new veranda. Dimond seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 26, 2015 the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 7-0:

RESOLVED to waive the demo delay on the partial demo of 158 Newtonville Avenue as proposed and approve the new veranda.

Voting in the Affirmative: Voting in the Negative: Abstained:

Nancy Grissom, Member
Jeff Templer, Member
Mark Armstrong, Member
Peter Dimond, Member
Laura Fitzmaurice, Member
Jean Fulkerson, Member
Ellen Klapper, Alternate

8. **63 Herrick Road – Waiver Request**
Request to waive demo delay

Chad McGuire and his architect, Mark Sangiolo, presented their revised plan to replace the National Register-listed house at this address. McGuire said he took into account the comments made by NHC at the December 2014 hearing, and acknowledged that their first attempt at a mansard style replacement structure was not the correct direction. He said he switched to more of an Italianate scheme to be more in keeping with the current house design. He also wanted an ell shape to his design.

This house was first presented for demolition at the July 24th NHC hearing. A delay of 18 months was imposed due to its listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The owner returned with replacement plans in December 2014, which were not approved due to the strong Mansard profile that was proposed to replace an Italianate style house. The owner is returning with revised plans for a new structure at this location.

At the July hearing, staff reported that this house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986 as part of a historic district in Newton Center. Herrick Road was formerly named Institution Avenue and was part of the Andover Theological Seminary property. Parcels were sold off in the mid-1800s as house lots, resulting in this end-gable Greek Revival/Italianate house build c.1860. Though the survey form for this property acknowledges alterations to the historic fabric in the 1980s, it was nonetheless included in the NR district and has been deemed a contributing element. As such, staff recommended the house preferably preserved and a demolition delay imposed for eighteen months due to architectural integrity and historic neighborhood context as part of a district.

At the July hearing, Commission members pointed out the various exterior elements that were considered to be hallmarks of the Italianate style and that it was its belief those details could be restored. Alderman Danberg reiterated this sentiment. This house contributes to a National Register listed district.

At this hearing, Commission members asked about the location of the new driveway and how it would affect access. The Commission was told that the entry to the below-ground driveway was reduced from the earlier design and was made wider at the base for a turning radius. Porches for both units would overhang the driveway. Other members asked about walkways and entrances to the two units. Each unit was to be approximately 2000 square feet with some basement space. The attic spaces would be finished. Members discussed the improved design elements of this scheme as compared to the plans it reviewed in December, and appreciated the new design. Another member thought the design could also emulate the Italianate entrance detail from the existing house for a nice touch. Members of the audience also praised the design and posed questions about minor elements.

Armstrong made a motion to waive the delay on the proposed demolition based on plans as presented. Templer seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 26, 2015 the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 7-0:

RESOLVED to waive the delay on the demo as proposed for 63 Herrick Road and approve the new plans.

Voting in the Affirmative: Voting in the Negative: Abstained:

Nancy Grissom, Member
Jeff Templer, Member
Mark Armstrong, Member
Peter Dimond, Member
Laura Fitzmaurice, Member
Jean Fulkerson, Member
Ellen Klapper, Alternate

9. **17 Barbara Road – Waiver Request**

Request to waive demo delay

Charles Calhoun, architect, presented his plans for a replacement house at this address that he said would fit into the neighborhood. He told the Commission that the lot was narrow and he was trying to maximize on available lot space. The design proposed a hipped roof on the sides and a front garage that was not set back from the front of the house.

This house was presented as a full demolition at the October 14th hearing (continued from the September hearing due to Rosh Hashanah). The house was found preferably preserved for historic context, and the owner is returning with a proposed replacement structure.

In October, staff reported that the house was built in 1951. This modest Cape Style house was one of many intact examples of this style on Barbara Road, all of which were built post-war. In April 2014, the house at 39 Barbara Road was voted preferably preserved by this Commission. The first owner and builder of the house was Antonio D'Angelo. Unlike the house at #39, which had no architect listed, this architect was Joseph Selwyn of Belmont. In 1959, the owner was Robert Drago, a tailor. His wife Mary was employed by Raytheon. In the 1970s the owner was Joseph Capalino, who obtained a permit to add a front dormer and rear addition. The Capalino family owned the house until at least 2005. The massing, modest design and construction, and siting on the lot are in keeping with the historic context of the neighborhood, which visually has changed little from its construction c.1951.

Commission members expressed concern about the amount of space occupied by the garage in the design; the hipped roof element in this design, which was not found elsewhere on the street; that there was too much space around the proposed window over the garage and that it was set too high; that the proposed roof plan was not simple enough to match others in this neighborhood; and that the house and garage were out of proportion to each other. A waiver of the demo delay on this property was not granted.

10. **93 Ruane Road – Waiver Review**

Request to waive demo delay

David Weinstein, who represented the architect on this project, presented a plan for the replacement of this house. He said it was to be of similar height to the original and that it would be built by Busa Development. He told the Commission that oversized ranches were the norm on this street and that this proposed design would be in keeping with that trend. The roof was to be low-slung and the garage would be to the rear of the house.

This house was first reviewed at the October 23rd NHC hearing and was found preferably preserved for historic context. The owner is returning with a proposed replacement structure.

At the October hearing, staff reported that Bernardo Corsi built this house in 1953 of wood frame and brick veneer. The first owner in 1955 was Henry L. Cabbitt, a surgeon, who continued to live there until at least 1964. In 1972, the house was owned by J. Damenski. By 1989 the house was owned by Anne Toyias. Over time, the family room and porch were remodeled. Houses in the immediate vicinity of this ranch house were built either the same year or within a few years of this house, with some houses lost to development on adjacent blocks.

Commission members commented on the proposed stair tower and the fact that the house would rise only 1.5 stories. The scale would also be retained and in keeping with other houses on the street. Others said that introducing this subtle variety in a ranch neighborhood made it an interesting replacement house. Others disagreed, and thought the existing house was interesting enough and in keeping with similar materials in the neighborhood. A member of the audience spoke to keeping the replacement house smaller. Commission members thought this design mitigated the loss of the current structure.

Templer made a motion to waive the delay on the proposed demolition based on plans as presented. Fulkerson seconded the motion.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 26, 2015 the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 5-2:

RESOLVED to waive the delay on the demo of 93 Ruane Road as proposed and approve the new plans.

Voting in the Affirmative: Voting in the Negative: Abstained:

Nancy Grissom, Member
Jeff Templer, Member
Mark Armstrong, Member

Peter Dimond, Member
Laura Fitzmaurice, Member

Jean Fulkerson, Member
Ellen Klapper, Alternate

11. **24 Duffield Road – Waiver Review**
Request to waive demo delay

Owners of this house pulled this application item mid-way through the hearing, so proposed plans for this replacement house were not reviewed by the Commission. It is unclear when the owners will return to the Commission to request a waiver.

This house was first reviewed at the August 28th NHC hearing and was found preferably preserved for architectural integrity and historic context. The owner was returning with a proposed replacement structure.

In August, staff reported that the house was built in 1911. This Bungalow Style house was first owned by John M. Groby, a manager in Boston. In 1913 Mr. Groby obtained a permit to add a piazza and pergola (still in existence), and in 1919 obtained a permit to build a garage. Groby still owned the home through at least 1940. By 1953, the home was owned by Edis VanLeir, who does not appear in directories by name. In 1955 the owner was Alfred Leiserson. By 1963, the owner was Robert Woods, and engineer. This house is an

intact example of a Bungalow Style house in a neighborhood of other Bungalow Style homes built at the early 20th century near the Charles River. Though the house show signs of deferred maintenance it is an otherwise intact example of a style not often found in Newton.

12. **Administrative Discussion:**

- a) The January minutes were unanimously approved by members present.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Katy Hax Holmes
Commission Staff

Approved